



# ECO SCHOOLS & BIOECONOMY

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# What is an Eco-School Programme?

- The Eco-Schools programme encourages young people to engage in their environment by allowing them the opportunity to actively protect it. It starts in the classroom, it expands to the school and eventually fosters change in the community at large. Through this programme, young people experience a sense of achievement at being able to have a say in the environmental management policies of their schools, ultimately steering them towards certification and the prestige which comes with being awarded a Green Flag.

<https://www.ecoschools.global/how-does-it-work>

# How it Works

The Eco-Schools programme consists of three structural elements:

- [The Seven Steps Framework](#)
- [the Eco-Schools Themes](#)
- Assessment for the Green Flag.

To be successful, the programme requires support from school leaders and the Board. Active involvement of staff is imperative as well as long-term commitment and the willingness to involve students in decision-making.

# Seven Step Framework



<https://www.ecoschools.global/seven-steps-methodology>



# Eco School - Themes



<https://www.ecoschools.global/themes>

# Green Flag

- Usually after two years of implementing the programme and reaching a high level of performance in complying with these seven steps (sometimes national mandatory criteria also applies), schools can then apply for and be awarded the **Green Flag**.
- Before receiving their first Green Flag, schools must be assessed by means of a visit. After the first Green Flag, other means of assessment are allowed, although visits are always recommended. Assessment should be carried out on a yearly basis.

# Why implement the Eco - School Programme

- It includes everyone
- It improves school environments
- It motivates the school community
- It involves the wider communities
- It improves attitudes
- It connects globally

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# What is Bioeconomy?

- “Bioeconomy is a systems-based approach that seeks to replace fossil resources in a sustainable manner with renewable biological resources from terrestrial and marine ecosystems – such as forests, crops, animals, fish, microorganisms, organic waste, and agricultural side streams, to produce food, feed, fibres, energy, bio-based products, and services within a circular economy framework designed to optimise resource use based on a cascading hierarchy of utilisation options. A sustainable and circular bioeconomy requires the application of education and training programmes, scientific research, technology, and innovation with the aim of not only creating economic value, but also regenerating and expanding ecosystems and biodiversity as well as improving the health and the well-being of society. By addressing these systemic changes in the economy, environment, and society, the bioeconomy contributes to achieving a better and more sustainable future where no one is left behind.”*

(p.23, BioBeo, Working Paper: Definition and Narratives of Bioeconomy)



# Why is the Eco-Schools programme a good practice in Bioeconomy education?



The themes and the principles covered by the Eco School Programme lend themselves to teaching the principle of Bioeconomy at schools as well, as they both encourage:

- the **project-based** learning
- the **interdisciplinary approach** as various, at times contradicting points need to be considered, compared or contrasted before decision making
- the **transdisciplinary approach**, as both Eco Schools and Bioeconomy education connect one topic to many school subjects, allowing students to delve into the concepts, find the connections, and study the causes and effects of human actions
- the **experiential learning** through learning by doing
- the **active involvement in decision making**, which is of key importance to the Eco School Methodology and the Bioeconomy education, and transforms the students to **global citizens by teaching them about the value of democracy and reaching a consensus for the common good**

# How can bioeconomy be taught through the Eco-Schools programme?

## CASE STUDY – ECO THEME 7 (Litter) & 11 (Waste)

### Reducing waste at Athens College Elementary School - The snack packages at school

- STEP 1 : The students formed an **ECO Committee**. They wanted to see how much and what kind of rubbish they threw every day.
- STEP 2 : They carried out an **Environmental Review**. They measured the amount of waste but also registered the type of waste. They realized that most of it came from the packages of the snacks the students consumed.
- STEP 3: They made an **Action Plan**. They decided to inform all students about their findings and asked them to find food packages made of bio products or snack bags made of bio fabric. They sent a letter to the parents asking them to contribute to their effort to reduce the litter from snack packages.
- STEP 4: They **evaluated the progress of their action plan** and they registered the amount of litter on a daily basis. After a couple of weeks, all students carried their snacks in bio fabric bags or Bio Snack Boxes made from the leftovers of pressed sugar cane.

# How can bioeconomy be taught through the Eco-Schools programme?

- Step 5 : **They linked their findings with the curriculum.** They learned about making tables and comparing quantities in Math so that they could present their findings and monitor the progress of the action plan.
- STEP 6: **They informed the wider school community about the project.** They made posters with the a QR code that presented the process from the beginning till the end. They sent a letter to the parents informing them about the need to buy bio snack boxes and bags. They also made a small magnet for the fridge with the motto “Our planet doesn’t come in packaging” and gave it to all the students. Finally, they shared the activity through the school platform in the form of an article. [Participation of Athens College Grade 2 students in the "European Week of Waste Reduction"](#)
- STEP 7: **They created an ECO CODE** with the phrase “Our Planet cannot be put in a package” and the students wrote or drew the code on post-it notes and placed them around their motto.

<https://youtu.be/gSylvqyY9oQ>

# Educational Resources



- <https://www.ecoschools.global/seven-steps-methodology>
- <https://biooekonomie.de/en/topics/in-depth-reports/bioeconomy-and-un-sustainable-development-goals>



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